

107. *Mr. Fulton.*] Is there any other direction in which you think the Act requires amendment?—I have not read the Act with the view of suggesting particular amendments.

108. *The Chairman.*] You think the law good if carried out in its integrity?—Yes; the only alteration I consider necessary is with regard to inspection, to enforce its provisions.

109. *Mr. Fulton.*]—Is yours a large Society?—Nearly one hundred men.

110. Would the Society take up the subject with the view of suggesting improvements?—I do not know; but, speaking generally, I have given expression to their views of the question.

111. *The Chairman.*] Is there not a jealousy as to females taking part in your trade?—Not that I am aware of. The males cannot overtake the whole of the work. Our trade is subdivided into three classes—1st. work done entirely by hand labour; 2nd. part hand labour and part by machine labour; 3rd. slops made in factories by as much machine labour as possible.

112. The kind of work done by men and women is well known?—Yes.

113. Would there be any jealousy if the women were to do what the men are accustomed to do?—I cannot say that there would not. It has not been attempted here. It has in some parts.

Mr. ANDREW THOMSON examined.

114. *By the Chairman.*] I am a partner in the firm of Thomson, Strang, and Co., drapers, clothiers, milliners, &c. Our premises are opened at a quarter to 8 a.m., and closed at 6 p.m. The women commence work at 9 a.m., and leave off at 6 p.m. The meal hour for the females is from 1 to 2. Our practice is for them to leave during the hour. We do not employ any under the age of fourteen. We employ about twenty-five females altogether, who come under the Act—no males. A notice, as required by the Act, is posted up in the workroom. They are not employed on piecework. We do not give them, nor allow them, to take work home. The earnings of the females vary from 10s. to 35s. per week, according to skill. The head dressmaker gets 80s. A fair average is 25s. for ordinary female employées, and 10s. and 15s. for learners and indifferent hands. There is no combination or society among the women.

115. *Mr. Bradshaw.*] Do you think the women could combine without outside women combining with them?—They have no need to do so; they are thoroughly independent as it is.

116. Have you any married women in your employment?—None.

117. How often has the Inspector under the Act visited your establishment?—I cannot say; not very often.

118. There are small places that compete with you—are they properly inspected, do you know?—I do not think so; they ought to be looked after.

119. Then you are of opinion, speaking generally, that the inspection is not complete?—Yes; but there is one thing I should like to say—namely, that I do not see why I should be held responsible if these women, against my wishes, choose to remain after 2 on Saturday. It has happened that the headwoman, in order to finish some work urgently required, has detained them after hours on Saturday on one or two occasions, but entirely against my orders.

120. *Mr. Fulton.*] The employer is responsible. You have power to compel them to leave. Does the question of holidays affect you—do you object to them?—Yes. We consider it unfair that we should be compelled to pay for what we do not get, especially when we get no adequate return from their employment; we cannot make it pay.

121. Have you registered a list in the Resident Magistrate's Court, as required by the Act?—Yes; it was done some time ago.

Mr. GEORGE FINDLAY examined.

122. *By the Chairman.*] I am a member of the firm of Findlay and Co, timber merchants, &c. Our factory is opened at 8 a.m., and closed at 5 p.m. We employ about 200 hands altogether. There are twelve lads, the youngest of whom is about sixteen years of age. We do not employ any women. Some of the boys are apprenticed, but not by regular indenture. They usually work down stairs for about a year, then go up stairs, excepting such as prefer to be saw-millers, who remain in the body of the mill. We have never had in our employ any lads under fifteen. We pay them—for the first year, 10s. per week; for the second, from 15s. to 20s.; then advance them 10s. per week per annum, till it reaches £3 a week. In four years they will be earning from 9s. to 14s. per day. The boys are employed during the time the factory is opened, and sometimes a little overtime. If a large order necessitates working overtime, the boys work as well as the men. Both men and boys are paid for overtime, at the rate of time and a half. We sometimes work a night shift, on which boys are employed. I was not aware that it is an infringement of the Act to employ boys under eighteen thus. I did not know the Act applied to us. We have no notice posted up except as to time of starting and leaving off. The boys are not aware that we could not employ them on overtime. The dinner hour is from 12 to 1. Some of the lads who live at a distance bring their dinner with them, and remain on the premises during the meal hour. There are conveniences for heating anything, or making tea. All the hands knock off at 12 o'clock on Saturday. At some places they do not leave off till 2 p.m. All the hands are on daywork. We tried piecework once with about two-thirds of the hands, but found it did not suit. They did not object to piecework—they were making higher wages at it. They have no means of earning money out of the regular hours. We do not give out work. A good many of the lads attend evening classes for instruction. Some good hands get £4 10s. a week at the joinery. Twelve is the average number of boys under eighteen employed at our mill.

TUESDAY, 14TH MAY, 1878.

Mr. THOMAS G. PASCOE examined.

123. *By the Chairman.*] I am a manufacturing clothier. The factory is in High Street. I employ about sixty hands in all, principally young women; six men. I do not think I have any under fourteen.